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"The Ismaili mission in Gujrat suffered a setback due to the negative propaganda of Nur Muhammad Shah (d. 940/1534), the son of Syed Imam Shah. He however had renounced his allegiance with the Imams, but it is doubtful that he had ever claimed Imamate for himself. Among the Imam-Shahis, a theory had been cultivated, equating Imam Shamsuddin Muhammad with Pir Shams as one and the same person. The theory has it that Imam Shamsuddin Muhammad had abdicated the Imamate in favour of Imam Kassim Shah and himself took up the mantle of the Pir and started mission in India. This "abdication theory" is also sounded in the Satveni'ji Vel of Syed Nur Muhammad Shah, which seems to have inserted in later period. The modern scholars curiously speculate that this theory was the creation of Syed Nur Muhammad Shah to legitimate his alleged claim to the Imamate that would have served his self-interest to endorse a genealogy, tracing his father back to the Ismaili Imam Shamsuddin Muhammad. It should be however noted that the Satveni'ji Vel had been in private collection of the Imam-Shahis in Pirana, containing 200 stanzas with endless errors and interpolations, whose 150 stanzas were printed in 1906 at Bombay into Khojki script for the Ismailis. The view of the modern scholars about the so-called claim of Syed Nur Muhammad Shah is based on the printed text.

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While going through the old manuscripts of the ginans, one can find an indication that the original work of Satveni'ji Vel should have been projected for 100 stanzas, dealing with the history of the Imams and the Pirs. It was compiled between 922/1516 and 926/1520 when Syed Imam Shah (d. 926/1520) was most probably alive; therefore, it seems impossible that Syed Nur Muhammad Shah had inserted the "abdication theory" during the period of his father. There is another point to touch that Syed Nur Muhammad Shah was admittedly well grounded in Ismaili history and knew that an Imam should be the son of the Imam, therefore, his alleged claim to the Imamate is highly doubtful.

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became a like Pir Sadruddin became Pir Sadardin in the ginans.

The scrutiny of the old manuscripts also throws a flood of light that the scribes had transmuted the word nur (light) for nar (Lord), resulting the rendering of Nur Muhammad Shah to Nar Muhammad Shah in the manuscripts. The modern writers, without examining the transcriptional error, hazard to theorize that Nur Muhammad, an alleged aspirant to the office of the Imamate had claimed as nar (Imam) for himself. Given that he had applied the term nar for himself in his ginans, composed almost during his father's time, then it seems improbable that his claim originated when his father was alive. His extant ginans also do not sound in this context a little likelihood. Summing up all these materials for evidence, it is worth stressing that the reliance on the key term, can do great injustice to its interpretation and even to larger tradition, and research must cross many barriers of old tradition and poor thinking in order to stand within another world view.

It is however certain that Nur Muhammad Shah had violated the communal disciplines, engendering the principal cause of the split after 926/1520, and he was the real renegade to have forsake Ismailism. In Manazil al-Aqtab, Nur Muhammad is made responsible for separating his followers from the main Ismaili stock. W. Ivanow writes on the basis of Manazil al-Aqtab wa Basati'nul Ahbab (comp. 1237/1822) that a certain Mukhi Kheta was the head of 18000 converted Hindus during the time of Pir Hasan Kabiruddin. He was commissioned to collect religious dues in a tithe wallet (jholi) in Gujrat and send the accumulated funds back to the main treasury in Sind. Not only this practice followed during the time of Syed Imam Shah, but it was carried on even under Syed Nur Muhammad Shah himself. The tradition has it that immediately after the death of his father, Syed Nur Muhammad Shah had ordered Mukhi Kheta that the accumulated funds of Gujrat should henceforth be deposited in Pirana, instead of Sind. Mukhi Kheta emphatically refused it, which was more likely a bone contention of the defection. The religious dues at that time was collected by the authorized vakils, and deposited at Sind, and thence the accumulated fund was remitted to Iran.

It seems that a large conversion had been resulted in the time of Syed Imam Shah in Gujrat and Kathiawar, where Mukhi Kheta collected the religious dues since the time of Pir Hasan Kabiruddin, procuring there more funds than that of Kutchh, Sind and Punjab. It is therefore most probable to speculate that Syed Nur Muhammad Shah had desired the main treasury to be shifted gradually from Sind to Pirana, so that he might use the funds at his liberty. It should also be noted that between the year 926/1520 and 931/1525, the tradition of venerating the shrines of the Syeds had developed in the adherents, who had supported Syed Nur Muhammad Shah. It also seems that he had planned to make Pirana a centre of veneration more attractive than that of Uchh in Sind. In pursuit, he needed funds, which he could only generate from the main treasury, and that is why he desired to transfer it from Sind to Pirana. He however instructed his followers to deposit their religious dues and offerings in Pirana.

Mukhi Kheta could not comply with the instructions of Syed Nur Muhammad Shah. Since Sind was near Iran than that of Pirana in making remittance to the Imam, therefore, it was immaterial to transfer the main treasury from Sind. In sum, the refusal of Mukhi Kheta and the opposition of Syed Nur Muhammad Shah, had marred the relations of the Ismailis of Sind and Gujrat, and it was an early brick of the schism, making the Indian Ismailis bifurcated into the two branches, i.e., the Khojas Ismailis and the Imam-Shahis.

After being disappointed, Syed Nur Muhammad Shah came up openly to misguide the Ismailis in India. All this had been brought to the notice of Imam Nuruddin Ali in Iran, who at once outcast him from the community with an express command, and instructed the faithful Ismailis to refrain from their association with the Syeds of Pirana. Thus, Syed Muhammad Shah laid the foundation of his group, known as the Imam-Shahis. The schism took place in the emotionally charged climate around 931/1525. W. Ivanow writes in The Sect of Imam Shah in Gujrat (JBBRAS, XII, 1936, p. 45) that, "The split, caused by Nur Muhammad Shah's pretensions, has done incalculable harm to his sect. Instead of being followers of Ismailism, the ancient and highly philosophical branch of Islam, with its great cultural traditions and the mentality of a world religion, they have become nothing but a petty community of "Piranawallas", a kind of inferior Hindus, and very doubtful Muslims. Anyhow, orthodox Muslims do not regard them as Muslims, and orthodox Hindus do not regard them as Hindus." The Imam-Shahi sect lost all its cultural elements and rapidly sank deeper and deeper, with no prospect of early regeneration. It is now a hodgepodge of Hindu and Islamic elements.

Bibi Khadija, the wife of Syed Imam Shah seems to have played a seminal role in the schism. She supported Nur Muhammad Shah and repudiated the recognition of the Imam in Iran. She seems to have declared Nur Muhammad Shah as the successor of Syed Imam Shah and the dissociated group made Syed Imam Shah as the founder. She summoned Syed Rehmatullah Shah, the son of Pir Hasan Kabiruddin at Pirana to win his support, but he refused to throw off his allegiance to the Imam in Iran. He stayed at Pirana for few months, and returned after marrying with a Syed lady. It is recounted that Syed Rehmatullah propagated among the Ismaili circles in India through his messengers that he had nothing to do with the Syeds of Pirana. He also arranged to sent a large amount of religious dues through two persons in Iran. Khayr Khwah Herati (d. after 960/1553) also confirms the visit of two Indian Ismailis, the followers of Syed Rehmatullah Shah, who had come to Khorasan on their way to search for the Imam to present religious dues, vide his Tasnifat, edited by W. Ivanow, Tehran, 1961, p. 54. Syed Rehmatullah also visited Badakhshan and Anjudan and reported whole story to the Imam. He finally settled down in a village, called Kadi.

Hence, a large conversion of Syed Imam Shah in Gujrat suffered a great reverse and the half-baked adherents of Islam were dragged into the most furious blasts of hostile winds. This alarmed a group of the adherents, inducing them to retrace their steps towards the fold of Hinduism, but most of them remained faithful to Ismailism. But, a major group in Pirana dissociated at the head of Nur Muhammad Shah, followed the mixed rituals of Islam and Hinduism, like Hussaini Brahmin, Shanvi and Bad Khwans. They propagated that the successor of Pir Hasan Kabiruddin was Syed Imam Shah, who was followed by Syed Nur Muhammad Shah. The schism also effected the ginans. It is most certain that the ginans of Syed Imam Shah had been adjusted at Pirana to suit the flavour of the Imam-Shahis. The mainstream of the community, known as the Khoja Ismailis in Sind, Kutchh, Kathiawar and Gujrat continued to adhere to the Imam.

Syed Nur Muhammad Shah died in 940/1534 and was buried in the mausoleum of his father in Pirana, the necropolis of the Imam-Shahi sect. He had several sons, the oldest being Jalaluddin and Mustapha. Syed Nur Muhammad Shah had however appointed one of his younger son as his successor, called Syed Miran Khan, surnamed Sai'duddin. Several stories are recounted about the cruelty of the brothers of Syed Miran Khan, who was exiled from Pirana. The shrine of Syed Imam Shah remained in the custody of Jalaluddin and his descendants for about a century, while the pirs in the descent of Syed Miran Khan were moving about the country. Syed Miran Khan rambled as a successor of his father in Surat, Burhanpur and the towns of the Deccan.

Mention must be made on this juncture about the institution of the kakas in Imam-Shahi sect that had taken root in Pirana. This institution was the headman of the converted Hindus. The kaka was the Imam-Shahi cleric and his duty was to settle the petty disputes and collect religious taxes. This institution had been introduced at an early period in petty village communities, and then penetrated into Pirana. The immediate cause of the final legalization of the status of the kakas at Pirana was the rivalries and quarrels of the sons of Syed Nur Muhammad Shah, who is said to have introduced the tradition of the kaka (headman). The kaka was appointed for life and had to take vow of celibacy and received food and clothing as remuneration. The number of the early prominent kakas was twenty-five, from Kaka Shanna to Kaka Lakhman. The institution of the kaka had a furtive character. For details, vide Pirana Satpanth'ni Pol (Rajkot, 1926) by Patel Narayan Ramji Contractor.

After the exile of Syed Miran Khan, the kaka began to dominate at Pirana in all affairs and proved to be an

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inexhaustible source of intrigue and misery to the community, which ultimately brought about the complete ruin of the Imam-Shahi sect. Most of the old literature of the ginans remained in their possession, which were interpolated. It must be noted that the theory of equating Imam Shamsuddin Muhammad with Pir Shams was most probably came up in process of the interpolations. The application of the word "Pir" and "Imam" also were added frequently in the ginans for Syed Imam Shah and Syed Nur Muhammad Shah. Many other terminologies of the Hindus and their deities were added in the ginans. Pir Satgur Nur was identified in their ginans with the Brahma, Syed Imam Shah as the incarnation of Indra and Nur Muhammad Shah was exalted as Vishnu. One legendary book was compiled in the name of Syed Imam Shah, namely Dashtari Gayatri, in which the genealogical details are mentioned, but no mention is made of the line of the Ismaili Imams. Another bombastic work was also created, called Chetamani of Pir Imam Shah, where the descent is traced back to "Syed Satgur Patra Brahma Indra Imam Shah" and "Adi Vishnu Nirinjan Nur Ali Mahomed Shah." Thus, the kakas enjoyed considerable autonomy to institute a number of fictitious theories and ceremonials

Meanwhile, a deputation arrived to invite Syed Miran Khan to Pirana, which he accepted and returned to his native place, where he died in 980/1572 and was succeeded by Syed Abu Ali Hashim. Syed Saleh (984-1021/1576-1612), another son of Syed Miran Khan is said to have a strong proclivity towards Ismailism, who also composed few ginans.

The shrine of Syed Imam Shah was in charge of the descendants of Jalaluddin, therefore, Syed Abu Ali Hashim had to procure a strong following in Pirana, who, at length took its charge and died in 1021/1612. His 15 years old son, Abu Muhammad Hashim, who decided to renovate the graves of his father and grandfather and erected a splendid mausoleum for them, near the shrine of Syed Imam Shah. Nur Shah, the son of Mustapha, the brother of Syed Miran Khan, was at that time the official keeper of the shrine of Syed Imam Shah. He and his brother, Walan Shah fiercely opposed the plan. Their opposition rose to armed obstruction and in a pitched battle between the two parties, the supporters of Nur Shah were defeated. The enmity and hatred between them were going on unabated, but the majority remained faithful to Abu Muhammad Hashim, who died in 1045/1636. His 12 years old son, Muhammad, also known as Muhammad Shah Dula Burhanpur, succeeded him. He left Pirana and went to Burhanpur in Khandesh and left behind his son, Abu Muhammad Shahji Miran in Pirana. He however died in 1067/1657 and was buried in Burhanpur. His successor Abu Muhammad Shahji Miran came to a tragic end due to the intolerance of the Mughal emperor Aurengzeb. According to Mirat-i Ahmadi (comp. 1174/1761), certain officials with an armed escort were sent to Pirana with the express summon of the emperor to arrest Shahji Miran. The sickly old man refused to go. Then, being dragged by force, he poisoned himself on the way to the city and died not far from Pirana, where he was brought back to be interred. This event took place in 1103/1692. His son and successor was 12 years old Syed Muhammad Shah, who wandered from Burhanpur to Pirana and the towns of the Deccan, and died in Ahmadnagar in 1130/1718. His infant son, Syed Muhammad Fazal Shah had been brought up for 12 years in Ahmadnagar.

Meanwhile, a deputation of 200 persons from Pirana was sent to Ahmadnagar to invite the young pir to come back. Hence, Syed Muhammad Fazal Shah was taken to Pirana, where he was met with great pomp. He however gave up all hopes of settling in Pirana owing to the strong influence of the kakas. He therefore went to Champanir, where he died on 1159/1746. Syed Sharif then succeeded, who returned to Pirana in 1885/1771, where his father had failed. In Pirana, he discovered that his life was insecure, therefore he tried to settle in Cambay, about 20 miles distant from Pirana. His temporary absence brought about some ugly development in Pirana. The kakas, by bribes, arranged with the local authorities to take hold of the old historical house of the pirs and pulled it down. When the news of sacrilege reached to Syed Sharif, he rushed back, only to find that it was too late. Curses followed between them and the atmosphere of Pirana remained as tense as ever. The guardian of Syed Imam Shah's shrine at that time was Karamullah bin Jafar, who gave his daughter to Syed Sharif in marriage. Syed Sharif however died in 1209/1795 and was succeeded by his son, Badruddin, also known as Bara Miyan. He continued the policy of his father to reduce the power of the kakas in Pirana. He also died in 1243/1827 and was succeeded by his son, Bakir Shah, the last pir of the Imam-Shahi sect in Pirana. He also died most probably in 1251/1835 without leaving any successor. Thus, the old line of Syed Nur Muhammad Shah (d. 940/1534) came to an end. The disciples of the Imam-Shahi sect are found in Ahmadabad, Kheda, Cambay, Baroda, Bhavanagar, Surat, Khandesh and Kutchh.

IMAMATE DAY [see YAUM AL-IMAMA]

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